

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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This is UNEVALUATED

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

1. As in past years, also in 1954 the Bulgarian armed forces have carried out and are in the process of carrying out a very intense organizational, training, and operational activity which is conducted very seriously. Particularly noteworthy was that carried out by the military Air Force. It appears probable that the BAF is continuously receiving new aircraft and equipment (particularly radio and radar) from the USSR, from Czechoslovakia, and from Eastern Germany and that the replacement of old reciprocating fighters with modern jet aircraft is far advanced.
2. Also, air installations and bases are in the process of being improved considerably. In addition to modernizing some of the older fields, aircraft are being gradually transferred to new fields equipped with large artificial runways and modern equipment, and the old and small airports are being abandoned or maintained as reserve or emergency fields.
3. The task of training flight and ground crew personnel appears to be very great in view of the low cultural and technical level of persons called up in Bulgaria, most of these being peasants. The various DOSO (Dobrovolna Organizatsiya za Sudeystvie na Obranata; Voluntary Organization for Defense Assistance) organizations contribute a great deal to the solution of this problem.
4. The navy is also carrying out intense activities in all fields. This year once again it particularly celebrated July 25, the "Day of the Soviet Fleet." 25X1
5. In the month of June 1954, there were observed from Varna nearly daily, firing (night and day) exercises by coastal artillery batteries against towed targets or targets placed at sea, as well as firing by antiaircraft artillery against sleeves towed by aircraft. Also there were complex landing exercises, with intervention by land and air forces and all guns of the coastal defense units.
6. In Varna a large number of students of the "Vasil Levski" Military Academy were observed; they came from all services and specialties; including infantry, artillery, engineers, air, and, something never observed previously, some with black shoulder

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boards like the artillery and engineers, with gold piping and the emblem of the transportation corps as used in the Soviet Army. This shows that starting this year the military academy of the Bulgarian Army has a new specialty, that of transportation specialists. The presence of very large numbers of students at the military academy in Varna certainly indicates that this year the summer camps of this academy were to be located in the vicinity of Varna.

7. Particular mention should be made of parachutist units which this year carried out noteworthy activity simultaneously in the areas of Sofia, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, and Varna. Students of the "Vaptsarov" Naval Academy were also observed in Varna.
8. This would lead to the belief that the Bulgarian parachutist regiment is composed of at least three battalions (possibly at reduced organic strength), one located at each of the places listed above.
9. In reviewing the military situation in Bulgaria, one has the clear impression that Soviet interference is ever increasing and that it is stronger and more decidedly resolute in the military field than in the political and economic fields. The presence of Soviet officers and troops in the Dobrudzha and the inspection or training visits which Soviet officers (particularly colonels) allegedly carried out at the Yugoslav frontier in the second half of July, having come from Rumania (via Calafat and Vidin), in two successive groups of 40 members each; both of these point to an increased Soviet interference.
10. For the present transportation by railway and by highway, as well as concentrations of troops (generally encamped) observed would indicate that exercises were carried out in Northeast Bulgaria (central-eastern Balkans zone between Gabrovo and Kotel); Central Bulgaria (Trojan-Teteven zone); Northwest Bulgaria (Belogradchik-Berkovitsa zone); Southwest Bulgaria (Dragoman-Radomir-Kyustendil-Razlog-Nevrokop zone); and Southeast Bulgaria (Elkhovo and Strandzha zone).
11. Thus, it is evident that exercises are not being carried out in one specific sector and this would confirm the fact that the training of troops is still the chief determining factor in their assignment to camps.
12. In late July 1954, there were numerous recalls of reservists. These recalls even affected members of the class of 1931 who had been dismissed in the spring of 1954.

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